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## IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM ADDISON HERVEY

Many a teacher of modern languages must have been deeply grieved on opening his paper the day after Christmas to read the news of the sudden death of Professor William Addison Hervey of Columbia University. And how many teachers and students in Greater New York and far out through Columbia's sphere of influence must have felt the holiday spirit turned to sadness at the thought that their lives would henceforth be poorer by a loyal and unselfish friend. Of every true teacher it may be said that he does not live for himself. Of Hervey it must be added that to an extraordinary degree he lived for his friends. Chance or the moves of an obscure fate bring into our lives many friends, whose influence then diminishes year by year. No one who had ever formed bonds of friendship with Hervey ever felt that they were wearing thin in this way. Like another Columbia Germanist, Rudolph Tombo, Jr., with whom he was associated for many years in intimate friendship, Hervey never waited for his help to be asked, but with a loyalty as unselfish as it is rare, he sought continually for those things which he might do for his friends. To his colleagues, even of temporary tenure, and to young and inexperienced teachers his resources of helpfulness were inexhaustible.

It was not merely to friends that he was loyal through thick and thin. He gave himself up to his life work with the devotion and enthusiasm that belongs to the ideal teacher, and brought to bear on it an industry of which few men are capable. Of too active a temperament to be a scholarly recluse, he nevertheless loved his studies and his work as teacher of German literature with rare affection. His syllabus of Lessing, Goethe and Schiller is a model of painstaking gathering of materials, careful analysis and accurate presentation, clarified by years of class-room and seminary experience. It is a teacher's philology in the best sense. Whoever saw him in his study, shut in at last from the distractions of committee and routine work and the thousand other duties which his energetic nature imposed upon him, could appreciate the deep affection, the *gaudium verum* of the eager and life-long student among his beloved authors.

To a man of so ardent a nature, the war came as a peculiar shock and disaster. The psychology of war time, with its superficial passions and its denunciation of everything connected with the enemy aroused in his fine spirit a deep sense of injustice. He was so thoroughly loyal in his love of country and so constantly ready for patriotic service that he could never understand the intolerant spirit that expected the American teacher of German to abjure the results of scientific study or throw overboard all the things he owed to German scholarship. Throughout the days of readjustment, more difficult with such a man than with those of more superficial nature, he found deep satisfaction in the doing of important patriotic service: first in the post office department at Washington and later for the department of justice. It is more than a guess that the unremitting labors of the early months of the war in Washington and the giving up of his vacations to patriotic duties definitely shortened his life.

To the bitter experiences of a teacher of German during the past few years there was added last spring a crushing domestic loss, the most terrible that can befall any man. When I saw him in May, he walked with the conscious erectness of one who had pledged himself to pass through the darkest shadows on the *via dolorosa* without faltering. But a letter written after the catastrophe showed that he had steeled himself to take up the broken threads of life once more; and a hard summer's work in the government service brought a new grip on affairs and flashes of the old enthusiasm. The success of the S. A. T. C. courses in German, which he assisted in planning, encouraged him, and the last visit I had with him on November 8 and a letter of November 20 showed that he had found himself in the new order of things and was looking forward with confidence to the future. And then came

"The blind Fury with the abhorred shears  
And cut the thin-spun life."

Modern language teachers owe more to Hervey than they know. He was active in both the New York State and the Middle States Associations. He was one of the small group of men who in 1915 took steps to set the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL upon its feet, and he never ceased to be thoughtful for its interests. His unselfishness and energy were peculiarly suited to work in organizations, where eternal tact must be paired with forgetfulness of self.

Opposition never swept him off his feet. Misconstruction and ill-humor never shook his imperturbable coolness. He believed thoroughly in the organization of teachers and he was always willing to give his time without stint and in the end to efface himself to help things forward. To mention but one instance, his work with various committees for the improvement of oral and aural work was of lasting value to our profession.

The work of the conscientious teacher is indeed done "for God's sake." No financial rewards beckon to him. His name rarely finds its way into the easy popularity of the daily press. His passing causes no ripple on the surface of public life. The more faithfully he works, the more he must learn to sink his own personality and the less the passing fame of the moment will be his. But as the years come and go, for him as to no other son of earth is the prayer of the Psalmist answered, "Establish Thou the work of our hands, yea the work of our hands establish Thou it!" The teacher's faithfulness to duty lives on in the flesh and blood even of those who have forgotten whence a sense of respect for science and a belief in the standards of accurate scholarship came into their lives. To live thus in the lives of his students and in the hearts of his friends is the only reward that Hervey would have desired.

ROBERT H. FIFE, JR.